

10/19/70

Dick,

Re your 10/14, thanks.

Your stuff to PH was fine. You may hear. I have no doubt we have shaken him very much. The little thing that most disturbs me, from what I know of him, is that cavalier bit about my ulcer and arguing. That is so irrelevant, so out of character! Little things can be big clues. I remain troubled, esp. about him. His is a fine mind and he has always been selfless and genuine. If inclined to associate with a few vermin.

He should have expected exactly the kind of thing you sent, for I'd been warning him of its likelihood. I have no doubt the result will be shock, but I do wonder if it will end in the restoration of "sense". However this riddle starts and ends, I do not think his common sense will figure in either. That is where he is long.

You know I am an autopsy buff! You are so right! The diagnosis has to be some form of Alvaritis, as you put it. And we'd be well advised to understand there is neither immunity nor vaccine. It has a less sinister but also deadly mutation, egotrippism. One of us is heavily infected right now-Bud. With at least a subconscious realization, too.

He may or may not think we are in cahoots, but he will know better. He certainly knows that all disagree violently, and that collaboration is required. If he gets this notion, it will be no more than a defense mechanism. He also knows that when I tell him I've given copies of my comment to anyone until after getting theirs that I'm not lying.

Some time ago a more sinister thought struck. That he sent the sickness around to get all the criticisms in advance of revision so that they could seem to be accommodated or to help indicate what had best be edited out before publication.

This whole thing remains an enigma to me. I make no other pretense. I lack the essential clue or, having it, have wrongly discounted or eliminated it. I can't believe he has flipped, either.

Sprague and Flammonde appeared on Fred Gale's (WMCA) show with Bud yesterday. Flammonde pretended he hasn't yet decided whether to do a book but says he is thinking of it at Bud's encouragement! Now's that for a conflict of interest! Yet the explanation of his trip to England with Bud is that his publisher paid for it. The hairier this gets, the more ticklish. But I think it is past the point where it is worth your time in trying to learn anything from Dick.

Hastily,